

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:WWEISLOGEL:BH

APPROVED BY P:MR.HABIB

NEA: AGRIFFIN

S/S: A. OTTO

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P 032109Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166454

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY PHILIP HABIB'S MEETING WITH HABIB
BOURGUIBA, JR., JULY 2

1. BOURGUIBA, JR. MET WITH THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HALF AN
HOUR JUST PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S LUNCHEON. AMBASSADOR
HEDDA ALSO PARTICIPATED. TUNISIAN PRESS GROUP BRIEFLY MET
WITH CONFEREES BEFORE MEETING AND TOOK PHOTOS.

2. BOURGUIBA, JR. OPENED SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION STATING
HE HAD WONDERFUL INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT FORD THAT MORNING.
HE SAID HE DESCRIBED TUNISIA'S CONCERNS. SHOWING MAP TO
MR. HABIB, HE POINTED TO LIBYA AND ALGERIA AND SAID THAT
TUNISIA STUCK BETWEEN TWO MONSTERS. HE LATER REFERRED TO
QADHAFI AND BOUMEDIENE RESPECTIVELY AS QUOTE CRACKPOT
PROPHET AND RACKETEER, END QUOTE. BOTH LIBYA AND ALGERIA,
HE STATED, ARE TIED TO AND CAN BE MANIPULATED BY SOVIETS
BECAUSE THEY PROCURE SO MUCH SOVIET HARDWARE. WESTERN-
ORIENTED TUNISIA MUST DEPEND ON EUROPE AND U.S. TO BALANCE
THIS THREAT, BUT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS IN EUROPE, TUNISIA
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IS JEOPARDIZED. BOURGUIBA SAID TUNISIA GRATEFUL FOR FMS

ASSISTANCE ALREADY PROMISED--DOLS 115 MILLION OVER FIVE YEARS. IN RESPONSE TO MR. HABIB'S QUERY WHETHER TUNISIA ABLE TO ABSORB THIS, BOURGUIBA ASSURED HIM THAT HIS COUNTRY HAS EDUCATIONAL BASE, MANPOWER AND ABILITY TO ABSORB THE

ARMS AND TECHNOLOGY.

3. BOURGUIBA MADE POINT THAT U.S. HAS BEEN THROWN BY CIRCUMSTANCES INTO FIRST POSITION IN WORLD AS GUARDIAN OF DEMOCRACY, BUT THAT MANY U.S. POLITICIANS NOT RPT NOT AWARE WHEN THEY DISCUSS PRICE OF OIL OR WHEAT IT HAS WORLDWIDE CONSEQUENCES. RUSSIANS DO NOT HAVE TO WRITE INFLAMMATORY SPEECHES AGAINST U.S. WHEN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF OFFICIALS ACHIEVE SAME RESULT FOR THEM.

4. RETURNING TO SUBJECT OF GOT'S DEFENSE NEEDS, BOURGUIBA SAID GOT DOES NOT RPT NOT WANT TO IMPEDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING TAKE-OFF PERIOD BY EXCESSIVE DEFENSE SPENDING. HE SOUGHT HELP FROM RIYADH AND KUWAIT DURING RECENT VISITS THERE, BUT THEY ARE INHIBITED, AFRAID OF ADVERSE REACTIONS TO THEIR PROVIDING ARMS WHICH MIGHT BE USED AGAINST BROTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. APPROACHES TO SHAH HAVE BEEN MADE, BUT HIS OWN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SPENDING IS SO GREAT THAT EVEN HE IS FORCED TO BORROW.

5. MR. HABIB POINTED OUT THAT U.S. PROBLEM IS TO DELIVER ON OUR PROMISES. HOWEVER, NAME OF TUNISIA IS RESPECTED IN CONGRESS, AND TUNISIA HAS A GOOD REPUTATION WITH U.S. PUBLIC. HE PROMISED TO PERSONALLY KEEP EYE ON PROVISION FOR TUNISIA UNDER 1977 AND SUBSEQUENT ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION AND TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO PREVENT CUTS IN PROJECTED ALLOCATIONS FOR GOT.

6. MEETING CONCLUDED WITH BRIEF EXCHANGE ABOUT TRAGEDY OF LEBANON, IMPROVEMENT OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN EGYPT AND ROLE OF U.S. ASSISTANCE THERE, AND SUDAN COUP. BOURGUIBA INQUIRED ABOUT NEWS FROM KHARTOUM AND WAS SHOWN LATEST TICKER.
ROBINSON

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